

# the MORE the MERRIER



BADMINTON. SLEEPING CABINS. WINE. DEBORAH BOWMAN AND ROBERT RICCARDI'S CALIFORNIA HOME HAS BECOME A STYLISH, LAID-BACK RETREAT FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY—A KIND OF SUMMER CAMP FOR GROWN-UPS.

BY LINDA O'KEEFE PHOTOS DANE TASHIMA  
PRODUCED BY MONIKA BIEGLER EYERS STYLING CHRISTINA WRESSELL

Deborah Bowman and Robert Riccardi added several doors and windows, *opposite*, for a better flow between indoors and out. Beneath a 16-foot-high ceiling, *this page*, Deborah arranged the living room seating for easy conversation. A pair of old leather trunks sits side by side in place of a formal coffee table.





These days, when Deborah Bowman anticipates a bevy of weekend guests at her house outside of Calistoga, CA, she's coolheaded and relaxed. That wasn't always the case. She and her husband, Robert Riccardi, used to spend days shopping for and prepping food. "After years of trying to do everything, we've come to realize that we don't need to put so much pressure on ourselves," Deborah says. "It's more relaxing and fun to let guests help with, or even take over, an entire meal. And they're happy to do it!"

That laid-back approach carries over into all aspects of weekends at their home, which has the feel of an adult summer camp. There are bikes for getting to nearby vineyards, hammocks for napping, and badminton rackets for afternoon matches. In the evening, Robert, an advertising executive, screens classic movies in the living room or mixes drinks in a former tractor shed they've transformed into a bar and pool room.

When the evening winds down, two outlying cabins become prized sleeping spots. They lack heat and hot water, but their simplicity is part of the appeal. "They are quiet except for the crickets and frogs, dark but for the stars," Deborah says. "Best of all, they have no cell reception."

It's the 1,855-square-foot house that is the hub, however. The couple renovated the place five years ago with entertaining in mind, opening it up to the outdoors and decorating with durable fabrics, forgiving surfaces, and a core of midcentury modern furnishings rich in patina. Deborah—a graphic designer who previously worked in a San Francisco auction house—is a savvy

antiques hunter, drawn to clean lines as well as signs of age. "Nothing here is precious. Dogs on sofas, kids dripping ice cream. Those things don't faze me," she says. "They're just signs of life."

*\*Portions of Deborah and Robert's property were damaged in the Tubbs wildfire. They are in the process of rebuilding.*



Deborah redesigned the former galley kitchen to accommodate a crowd. She worked in as much counter space as possible and a zinc-topped central island to give multiple cooks room to prep.

Adjustable furniture converts for larger gatherings.

In the dining room, above, the table (inspired by a midcentury design) extends to fit up to 14. The patio, right, is usually set up for lounging, but hinged legs on the custom-made coffee table elevate it to dining height for outdoor entertaining. The sofa and armchairs are just pushed back and replaced with a pair of benches.





» A GALVANIZED METAL FAN (MODERNFAN.COM) ADDS AN INDUSTRIAL NOTE.

“THE PLACE IS FULLY ALIVE WHEN EVERY SQUARE INCH IS BEING USED.”

DEBORAH BOWMAN



In a sleeping cabin, above left, mismatched bedside lamps and a stool used as a side table reflect the main home's casual vibe. Artwork climbing to the ceiling stands in for a headboard. Evenings invariably wind down with a game of pool in the converted tractor shed, left, where wall-mounted shelves serve as a makeshift bar. Robert and Deborah, above, spruced up the shed with new wall paneling and ceiling beams, plus reclaimed windows and hardware. Two new sets of double doors completed its transformation from utilitarian to welcoming. ■

**BH&G INSIDER**  
Deborah shares her favorite sources for buying vintage furniture at [BH&G.com/Bowman](http://BH&G.com/Bowman).



« A MIDCENTURY DESK DOES A MORE PRACTICAL, SPACE-SAVING JOB THAN TWO NIGHTSTANDS.

Twin beds in the main house's guest rooms make sleepovers feel like summer camp.

